

I-90 Corridor Roadside Facilities Study Update

October 2006

The second public information meeting was held on September 28, 2005 at West Salem. Approximately 25 people attended to provide comments on the reasonable alternatives being considered. Most people indicated that upgrading the existing French Island Welcome Center and maintaining truck parking is important to the traveling public and local economy. There was also support for building a modern SWEF to expedite truck weighing and inspection and to eliminate backups on the I-90 ramps.

Since the second public meeting the study team has completed engineering and environmental evaluation on the alternatives and has obtained additional input from state and federal review agencies. The draft environmental document that reports the need for the proposed improvements, describes the range of alternatives considered, and identifies the preferred alternative and its impacts is being reviewed by WisDOT.

The third project advisory committee meeting was held on September 7, 2006 to review the reasonable alternatives considered at the four roadside facilities and reasons why some alternatives were eliminated, review the preferred alternative and its impacts, and to present the construction phasing plan. Project advisory committee members include local officials and representatives from the Department of Tourism, Rehabilitation for Wisconsin, State Patrol, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Motor Carriers Safety Administration and the Wisconsin Motor Carriers Association. The advisory committee list is included at the back of this information packet.

Alternatives Review

The reasonable alternatives that were presented to the project advisory committee on September 22, 2005 and at the second public information meeting on September 28, 2005 are summarized below.

Welcome Center Alternatives

- Alternative 1: 78 auto stalls and 20 truck stalls within the site's existing boundary
(Selected by WisDOT as the preferred alternative)
- Alternative 2: 71 auto stalls and no truck parking; 9 stalls large enough to accommodate recreational vehicles
(Eliminated from further consideration because project advisory committee members and the public supported keeping truck parking at the Welcome Center)

SWEF Alternatives

- Alternative 1: Modern weigh-in-motion facility with 48 truck parking stalls on the existing site and a portion of the private property east of the SWEF
(Alternative 1 was eliminated to avoid Cal-West Seeds, residential proximity impacts and one displacement)
- Alternative 2: Modern weigh-in-motion facility with 48 truck parking stalls at the Bangor Rest Area that would no longer be used as an eastbound rest area
(Selected by WisDOT as the preferred alternative)
- Alternative 3: Modern weigh-in-motion facility with 48 truck parking stalls on a farm east of Bangor
(Alternative 3 was eliminated to avoid farm impacts)
- Alternative 4: Modern weigh-in-motion facility with 48 truck parking stalls on an undeveloped site west of the WIS 27 interchange in Sparta
(Alternative 4 was eliminated due to property impacts)

Bangor Rest Area Alternative

The only reasonable alternative considered for the Bangor Rest Area was to eliminate this facility for the following key reasons:

- Too close to Welcome Center (20 miles)
- Autos accommodated at Welcome Center and Lyndon Station Rest Area; trucks accommodated at new SWEF
- Reduces operation and maintenance costs

Sparta Rest Area Alternative

The only reasonable Alternative considered at the Sparta Rest Area was to upgrade the existing facility to modern design standards.

Recommended Plan

French Island Welcome Center

Preferred Alternative 1 has the following key features:

- 78 auto stalls and 20 truck stalls within the site's existing boundary
- Truck parking moved to north end of site, auto parking at south end
- New building overlooking French Slough
- Continuous auxiliary lane between Welcome Center and County B interchange
- Constructed within existing facility right-of-way
- Impacts—estimated cost \$7.3 million, upland habitat 0.4 acre

A field meeting was held with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Welcome Center staff to identify environmental constraints and other site considerations (preserve eagle roosting trees, wetlands, shoreline vegetation and the trail; accommodate drainage from paved surfaces; provide green space and other aesthetic treatments such as a deck off the new building and fishing access).

SWEF

Preferred Alternative 2 has the following key features:

- Uses existing Bangor Rest Area
- Modern building/inspection facilities
- 48 truck parking stalls providing additional eastbound truck parking in the I-90 corridor
- Weigh-in-motion capability
- Requires replacement of the County Highway J structure over I-90
- Requires 4.5 acres of new right-of-way
- Impacts—estimated cost \$10.5 million, upland habitat 16.7 acres (existing and new right-of-way)

Sparta Rest Area

Proposed improvements to the existing rest area include the following:

- 90 auto stalls and 58 truck stalls within the site's existing boundary
- Auto and truck parking moved to northwest side of site to avoid resource impacts (wooded hill and wetlands per field meeting with DNR)
- Larger, modern building
- Constructed within existing facility right-of-way
- Impacts—estimated cost \$4.1 million, upland habitat 8.9 acres, leased cropland 18.1 acres

Construction Phasing

The proposed roadside facilities will be constructed in phases starting with the Welcome Center in 2011, followed by the SWEF in 2012 and the Sparta Rest Area in 2013.

What's next?

Upcoming activities to conclude the I-90 Facilities Study include the following:

- Preliminary environmental document—late fall 2006
- Final environmental document—winter 2006
- Begin engineering design—early 2008

There will be additional public information opportunities in the project's engineering design phase.

Study Contacts

To keep informed about the I-90 Corridor Facilities Study, you may contact one of the following study team members.

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